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Official Defends CIA

Angolan Recruiting Denied

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Of The Journal Staff

Deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency Tuesday denied direct recruiting of mercenaries to fight in Angola.

Gen. Vernon A. Walters skirted questions about CIA assistance in hiring paid soldiers in the African civil war.

Walters had been unconfirmed reports of indirect CIA assistance for the U.S.-supported faction in the fighting.

Speaking to an overflow crowd at the town Rotary Club, Walters flatly ruled out CIA hiring of mercenaries.

Walters also said the CIA has been subjected to a

"barrage of slander and innuendo unprecedented in the nation's history."

He blamed some controversial CIA actions, recently brought to light, on a handful of "kooks and over-zealous."

The 35-year-military veteran said he resented the attempt to portray the actions of a few "as typical of the entire organization."

Walters also answered for about 400 Rotarians and guests charges of CIA assassination attempts, massive wiretaps and use of "mind-bending drugs" and deadly toxins.

"The investigations found that no one had been assassinated," he said.

"In the past 27 years there have been 32 CIA

wiretaps, an average of 1½ taps a year," he said.

Walters, who has served for 3½ years as deputy director, termed the death attributed to a CIA experiment with hallucinogen drugs as "unfortunate." "Many distinguished colleges and universities at that time were also conducting research into mind bending drugs," he said.

The blunt-spoken deputy director said the CIA became concerned about possible uses of drugs on Americans by the Soviet Union and wanted to learn more about the drugs.

Walters went on to explain that research with deadly shellfish toxins was conducted for similar reasons, then shelved. "We're the ones who reported it to Congress," he noted.

Walters, who added little to official statements by CIA and White House officials, said he welcomed the opportunity to tell the CIA's side of the story.

"But, when you have 76,000 individuals pass through the agency, like we've had in the last 20 years, you're bound to get some who use poor judgment, are over-zealous and make mistakes," he said.

"We have had our share of kooks and all sorts."

"You can minimize abuses but you can't legislate them out of existence."

"I repeat: nobody's been assassinated . . . none of the toxins have ever been used."

Walters noted that the controversial actions were those 15 to 20 years old. He said former President Kennedy warned the agency that it would be subjected to "those who rummage in the garbage pails of history."

However, Walters said the disclosures have had little effect on the agency.

"I wish I could say yes, they've been catastrophic and must stop, but I can't," he said. He called CIA employees a "tough bunch of people who can stand the heat."

"The main thrust of the agency goes on."

The CIA's fate is to be "publicly pilloried for its failures but with successes passed over," said the presidential appointee.

However, Walters did say covert activities take up a far smaller share of the agency's budget than 15 years ago.

He cited declining involvement in Laos and Vietnam for the drop in clandestine work.

"We don't have CIA agency personnel in

(Cont)